

REMARKS

In the office action mailed on June 12, 2003, the Examiner rejected the claims as being anticipated by Waters or as being unpatentable over Waters in view of Bonnema, Wischhusen and/or Thornbloom. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

This invention is directed to lids for utility boxes. Unlike other lids, utility box lids are subject to loading by people standing on the lids, or even more demanding, from vehicles driving over the lids. The Examiner's attention is invited to the Declaration of Robert McKinnon, Jr., the inventor of the subject application. Mr. McKinnon discusses utility box lids in paragraphs 5-7. Mr. McKinnon set out to develop a plastic lid that could compete with cast iron lids. Previously, no plastic lid could compete with cast iron lids, as none had the strength.

The claims have been amended to provide that the lids are solid. Some claims, such as claims 58-65, already provide that the member is of a single layer. The solid lids have recesses for allowing the plastic to cure. Waters teaches a double wall lid for use on a vehicle tool box. A vehicle tool box lid is on top of a vehicle and obviously is not subjected to vehicles driving over the lids. Thornbloom does teach a solid lid, although that lid is for an ice chest, not a utility box. There is no suggestion to combine the two.

Suppose that one of ordinary skill combined the two, making the Waters lid solid. Why would the modified Waters lid have recesses? Waters teaches a double wall lid having indentations 40; at the indentations,

the double wall is fused together for structural integrity. If one made the Waters lid solid to make it stronger, there would be no need for the recesses.

Mr. McKinnon has long experience with utility boxes and lids and the requirements by customers, the installation and use of the boxes and lids and of the manufacture thereof. He has been involved in manufacturing plastic boxes and lids for the last 12 years. He has at least ordinary skill in the art of molded plastics and above ordinary skill in the art of manufacturing plastic utility boxes and lids.

Mr. McKinnon has reviewed the patents cited and relied upon by the Examiner to reject the claims. As one of ordinary skill in the art, he would not look to Waters, Bonnema, Wischhusen or Thornbloom for help in designing a utility box lid because these patents all teach lids of double-wall construction. The prior art lids are of insufficient strength for a utility box. Indeed, the lids of Waters, Wischhusen, Bonnema and Thornbloom would be weaker than injection molded utility box lids such as shown in his father's patent, McKinnon, U.S. Patent No. 4,163,503 (of record). Robert McKinnon, Jr. wanted to improve on the injection molded lids, not take a step backwards.

Mr. McKinnon would not look to Thornbloom to provide a solid utility box lid. Thornbloom teaches a lid for a portable ice chest. Mr. McKinnon believes that the Thornbloom lid, if solid, would be thin so as to be light in weight and not necessarily of sound structural strength. The lid of Waters is not a high strength lid for utility boxes. There is no motivation to solidify the lid of Waters; to do so would increase the weight of the lid with no gain in structural strength.

The claims have also been amended to provide that the members and the lids are compression molded from plastic material. As noted by Mr. McKinnon, he initially tried rotational molding, but to obtain a lid of high strength, rotational molded lids had warped top and bottom surfaces which have low commercial appeal. He solved the warping problem by utilizing compression molding. None of the cited references teach compression molded lids.

Furthermore, none of the references teach how to solve the problem of curing plastic inside of compression molded members for utility box lids of high structural strength. Mr. McKinnon solved this problem by providing recesses. The patents relied upon by the Examiner do not teach the use of recesses to cure plastic in compression molded plastic.

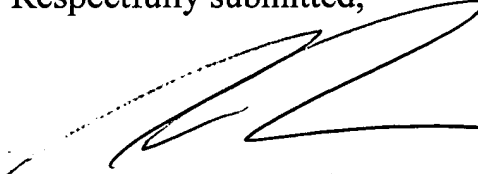
New claims 66-68 provide a lid with plural spaced apart recesses located in the lower side. The recesses have a depth which is the distance the recesses extend toward the upper side. The depth of the recesses is no greater than two-thirds of the member thickness. Claim 69 and its dependent claim provide a lid where at least some of the recesses are spaced apart from each other a distance that is greater than the depth of the respective recesses. Claim 71 provides a lid where the thickness is at least one and one-half inches and the lid can withstand 8000 pounds in a load.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims in the subject application are allowable and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$541.00 for the filing fee as well as the additional claims. If any additional fees are required, please charge

our deposit account number 23-2770.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Mantooth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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